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SCIENCE

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THE COLLEGE TEACHER AND RESEARCH¹

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It is a part of the function of every progressive institution of learning, not only to impart knowledge to students, but to do its share in accumulating knowledge for the benefit of mankind. To this end, scientific research in some form is indispensable to the best attainment of a college.

It is far from my thought to place the importance of research on as high a plane as that of training character, but it is hoped that there may appear some elements in common to the two, and no lack of consistency between them.

It can hardly be doubted that there is such a thing as a research instinct. A small boy exhibits it when he picks to pieces a dead fly, or tries to make ink out of mud, or puts a firecracker in a glass bottle to see what will happen. Curiosity is an inseparable ingredient of the human make-up, and research is curiosity directed by a noble purpose and put to a noble service. There is something about the acquiring of first-hand knowledge that stimulates individuality and gives a sense of personal achievement. And with a person whose life and activities are chiefly intellectual, the exercise of this instinct is as essential to his progress as eating is to his physical welfare.

One of the sad privations in the life of a foreign missionary is said to lie in the fact that he is constantly giving out to those about him, without having the spiritual refreshment that would be afforded by association with kindred minds. He is constantly teaching religion to ignorant, undeveloped people, and longs for someone who will understand and sympathize with his point of view. Too often, the teacher of science in the small

¹ Address given before the physics luncheon at the Iowa Academy of Science, April 23, 1920.